



Issue: Emergency Contraception: Availability and Access for Sexual Assault Victims

Position Statement:

The Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance supports efforts that increase access and availability of Emergency Contraception for all female victims of sexual assault. The Action Alliance opposes any efforts that place undue burdens or restrictions on female victims of sexual assault seeking Emergency Contraception and hamper a victim's ability to obtain Emergency Contraception in a timely manner.

Rationale:

Sexual assault victims have acute and long-term medical needs, including competent, comprehensive treatment and access to appropriate follow-up services. The American Medical Association and the American College of Emergency Physicians recognize Emergency Contraception as part of the standard medical treatment for victims of sexual assault.

Emergency contraception is an important option for victims of sexual assault. The ability to prevent a pregnancy is integral to regaining control of one's body after a sexual assault and this decision should be between the victim and her doctor/health care provider regardless of her decision to report the assault to law enforcement. Once that decision is made, the victim must have timely access to Emergency Contraception, usually within 72 hours, since the effectiveness of currently approved methods diminishes with time.

For these reasons, the Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance supports efforts that increase access and availability of Emergency Contraception and opposes any efforts that place undue burdens, restrictions, or barriers on a victim's ability to obtain Emergency Contraception in a timely manner.